

## **Testimony to the Joint Committee on Aging February 26, 2013**

### **H.B. 6460 AN ACT LIMITING THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION ABOUT MISSING ADULTS**

Good morning, Senator Harp, Representative Serra, and all members of the Joint Committee on Aging. My name is Alvin Fryxell, and I am a current resident of Windsor, CT. **Thank you in advance for considering my testimony in support of H.B. 6460 AN ACT LIMITING THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION ABOUT MISSING ADULTS.**

As a young person, well actually I am 31, so as my wife likes to remind me, I am no longer young; however, I am young at heart and I am in recovery. Since achieving recovery 3 years and 5 months ago, I have become very passionate about giving back to the community and assisting others as they work to achieve and maintain their own recovery. To be the most effective, I decided to return to school, and I am finishing my last semester of the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Counseling Associates program at Manchester Community College.

The fact that I currently have a 4.0 GPA, I am working in the position I have sought for three years, and I am married with two beautiful children, are undeniable examples of the positive outcomes of recovery. I know personally, that I would have been devastated if something published in the media prevented me from establishing myself in my new roles.

As I read through the Silver Alerts being issued for individuals throughout the State of Connecticut, it does seem that these alerts are going to become a significant barrier for individuals as they achieve stability in the community.

For example, my peer, Jamieson Hart of Danbury, CT is a 29-year-old, who went missing on October 6, 2012.<sup>1</sup> In the Silver Alert it includes that Jamieson is on medication. I am very concerned that by including that he is in need of medication in the Silver Alert, that there will be later discrimination as he applies for jobs or housing. This is especially true given the fact that Silver Alerts are for individuals who over the age of 18 and are mentally impaired.

Given the current social climate and the prevailing negative stereotypes associated with mental illness, the Silver Alert could be misconstrued that Jamieson has gone AWOL and is now a threat to the community. That is obviously an assumption that is completely unfounded and has no grounding in research, but we have to remember that the vast majority of the community is extremely fearful of individuals who are considered mentally ill and not taking their medication.

I would ask that the information provided in a Silver Alert be limited, as suggested in **H.B. 6460 AN ACT LIMITING THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION ABOUT MISSING ADULTS**. I can understand the need to locate these individuals so that they can get the support they might need, but maybe we can add a statement like, "(this person) may be in need of urgent medical care."

Thank you very much for allowing me to share my testimony with you today.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.wfsb.com/story/19754418/silvert-alert>